

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: April 24, 2014
Project: Mulberry at Park
Location: 200 W. Mulberry Street

Meeting No.: 183
Phase: Schematic

PRESENTATION:

1. The site is located at 200 West Mulberry Street, bounded by Tyson Street to the west, West Pleasant Street to the south, and row houses to the east that face Park Avenue. The project is being developed as a 68-unit, seven story affordable multi-family apartment building, using tax credit financing. Other team members include Marks Thomas Architects and civil engineers Colbert Matz Rosenfelt.
2. Mr. Ned Howe, from developer Enterprise Homes, introduced the firm as a mid-Atlantic regional leader in residential development, with a focus on work force and affordable housing. Mr. Howe noted that the \$20 million, 68 unit project had received tax credit financing. The project fills nearly the entire site, and has the following components and characteristics:
 - a. There is a 5' walking alley on the east side abutting the Park Avenue row houses, providing emergency egress from a fire stair and allowing limited window openings.
 - b. There is a below grade 19 space parking garage, bike storage, and building equipment and utilities. The garage is entered from Tyson Street.
 - c. The first floor includes the main entry lobby on West Mulberry Street, resident amenities, and a management/leasing office that face Mulberry, and 4 residential units that face the alleys, garage ramp, and egress.
 - d. There are 6 floors of residential units above the ground floor. The 7 story building height at approximately 72' in height is below the requirements for high rise construction.
 - e. A second floor south facing courtyard along West Pleasant Street provides a protected play area for residents.
 - f. The roof includes an extensive green roof to assist with meeting storm water management, and condensers for the units and rooftop equipment for common areas, resident services and amenities.
3. Ms. Nancy Liebrecht, from Marks Thomas Architects, discussed the design of the project.
 - a. Existing Context
 - i. The neighborhood includes a mix of buildings and vacant lots. The proposed site is vacant with the exception of one row house.
 - ii. Most of the neighborhood is comprised of three and four story row houses, with an occasional one story retail building, a 7-8 story office building east on West Mulberry Street, and a five story abandoned apartment building immediately west of the site.
 - iii. Most of the neighborhood is residential with some local stores in the base of some row houses or in free standing single story buildings.
 - b. Project Design
 - i. General

1. Site
 - a. All sidewalks are cast-in-place concrete
2. Building Design
 - a. There is a tripartite division of base-middle-top
 - b. The third floor masonry spandrel projects beyond the face of the building, similar to a traditional belt course or entablature.
 - c. 4-story “bays” are expressed with a 2” inset and change from brick to medium grey cementitious panel.
 - d. 2” recesses at the third and fifth floors and single width windows are infilled with masonry or medium grey cementitious panels.
 - e. The top floor, at window sill height, transitions from brick to light composite panels.
 - f. All windows, with the exception of the vertical grouping on the southeast corner, are sliders with same dimension.
 - g. The window pattern from below repeats at the top floor, with the exception of the southeast corner of the West Mulberry Street elevation.
 - h. Penthouse(s) and elevator override are not currently shown.
- ii. West Mulberry Street
 1. Site
 - a. There is approximately four feet of grade, with the northeastern corner approximately 4’ above the the northeastern ¼ mass of the building steps out approximately 18” in plan to follow a slight skew in West Mulberry Street
 - b. There is approximately a 7’ sidewalk width, including area for tree pits, with some variation in width due to street geometry
 - c. The building sets back approximately two feet from the street face of the row house at West Mulberry Street and Park Avenue
 - d. Five street trees in standard tree pits are shown on the plan; three are shown on the elevation, including one at the corner of West Mulberry and Tyson Streets
 2. Elevation
 - a. Since the intersection of Tyson Street and West Mulberry Street is a minor intersection, the architect stated that there is no need to mark the corner with a tower.
 - b. The base, at two stories, includes a mixture of masonry, light cementitious panels, and light grey cementitious pilasters.
 - c. Amenities, lobby space and leasing office are expressed with retail-scaled fenestration.
 - d. A two bay-wide cable suspended metal canopy with “MULBERRY AT PARK” 3 – 4’ tall signage marks the entrance.
 - e. A bay-wide vertical light cementitious panel slot, just south of the corner offset, marks the entrance lobby, with a brick spandrel at the seventh floor.
 - f. The middle section - floors three through six - is otherwise predominantly masonry.
- iii. Tyson Street
 1. Site
 - a. An approximately 4’ sidewalk is located between the building and the street.

- b. The elevations indicate that there are two street trees along the north face.
 - c. There is an accessible entrance from Tyson Street to the building lobby.
 - d. Trash, transformer, and garage ramp entrance are accessed from Tyson Street. The ramp entrance is located at the lowest elevation of the site in the southwest quadrant.
2. Elevation
- a. The two story brick masonry base, fenestration patterns, implied medium grey bays and top floor expression is generally consistent with the West Mulberry Street elevation.
 - b. An inset two story light cementitious panel marks the accessible building entrance.
 - c. On floors 3 – 6, the front masonry returns one window bay from West Mulberry Street. From this point west, the mid-section consists of medium grey cementitious panels.
 - d. A painted hollow metal set of trash doors is adjacent to the accessible entrance and painted metal transformer ventilation louver is adjacent to the garage ramp.
- iv. West Pleasant Street
1. Site
- a. Grade rises approximately six feet from the southwest corner to the southeast corner.
 - b. There is no sidewalk provided or needed as this serves predominantly as an alley.
2. Elevation
- a. The two story brick masonry base, fenestration patterns, implied medium grey bays and top floor expression is generally consistent with the Tyson Street elevation, less the vertical brick return.
 - b. Three large openings with security grills provide light and air to the parking ramp.
 - c. First floor unit windows face the parking ramp.
 - d. Sills of first floor unit windows, from the approximate midpoint of the first floor to the southwest corner, are flush with or slightly above the alley pavement.
 - e. Balconies are provided for floors 3- 6 within the courtyard.
- v. South Exposure – none provided

COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL:

- a. Existing Context
 - i. The panel requested that elevations include context of existing and proposed development for one block on either side of the subject property
- b. Project Design
 - i. General
 - 1. Site + Plan

- a. The program virtually fills the site. The panel requested the development team to create a slightly greater setback on West Mulberry Street to allow for some green space and adequate sidewalk width.
 - b. Reconsider arrangement of first floor spaces.
 - i. In lieu of amenity space tucked into the grade along West Mulberry, and expressed with large storefronts, consider moving those spaces to Tyson and West Pleasant Streets.
 - ii. In conjunction with site plan adjustment noted for West Mulberry Street, place units facing West Mulberry Street.
 - iii. Move the leasing/management office from West Mulberry Street to Tyson Street.
 - iv. Consider moving the trash room away from the handicapped entrance, closer to the transformer and parking garage entrance.
2. Expression and Elevation
- a. The project has an institutional or commercial character. Consider incorporating more residential cues into the design.
 - b. The tripartite division is a positive design move, given the apparent scale shift from adjacent flat front row houses. There are too many exceptions to the “rules” resulting in lack of clarity. Reconsider the number of material and planar moves, and/or the specific comments for each elevation below.
 - c. Provide additional detail related to the third floor masonry spandrel as it does not clearly show enough emphasis.
 - d. Consider adding additional profile or emphasis to the building top.
 - e. The 2” inset of the 4-story “bays” will read flat. Consider adding some greater depth with projection or inset.
 - f. 2” recesses at the third and fifth floors at single width windows are so subtle that they are virtually unreadable. Consider additional detail and/or stronger color shift.
 - g. Consider providing some variety with windows that expresses internal function, e.g. windows within living areas are different from windows in bedrooms.
 - h. Reconsider the single window at the southeast corner of the West Mulberry Street elevation.
 - i. Show penthouse(s) and elevator override.
- ii. West Mulberry Street
- 1. Site
 - a. The tree pits cause an uncomfortably narrow sidewalk.
 - b. Consider providing a 24 – 30” planting bed against the building to create a transition zone to from the public sidewalk to the building.
 - c. Provide a low fence at the sidewalk edge.
 - d. Increase sidewalk width.
 - e. In the event that tree pits are required by the city, increase building setback to allow for adequate sidewalk width.

2. Elevation
 - a. The plan and façade adjustment that steps with street width does in fact mark the corner with a tower, though a minor one. This is not necessary, though not a fatal flaw.
 - b. The panel suggests reconsidering the base with the following specific suggestions:
 - i. At two stories, the pilasters are too thin and not proportioned well. Consider using masonry piers to allow the masonry wall above to resolve itself to grade. Alternatively, the masonry wall with punched openings, particularly with the plan modifications suggested b.i.1.ii above, could carry to grade with or without the projected third floor spandrel.
 - ii. Since the spaces behind the retail-scaled fenestration may not be as active as an actual retail space, consider an alternative treatment as noted above.
 - c. Since the lobby is only a double width of windows, the panel suggested reconsidering the two bay entrance, and providing a more modest canopy. Since this is a residential use, consider if two sets of double doors is appropriate or required.
 - d. In lieu of spelling out “MULBERRY AT PARK” with 3 – 4’ tall retail-like consider a more modest signage approach that may include the street address, or something more appropriately scaled to residential use.
 - e. Reconsider the bay-wide vertical light cementitious panel slot, just south of the corner offset – is the material change really necessary?
 - i. If retained, consider eliminating the brick spandrel at the seventh floor, allowing the light panel cementitious to ground itself.
 - ii. In the event that the entrance moves, consider eliminating the slot.
- iii. Tyson Street
 1. Site
 - a. Since the sidewalk is approximately 4’ wide, delete the street trees, or increase the setback of the building from the curb to the face of building to allow for both sidewalk and trees.
 - b. Reconsider the organization of trash, transformer, and fenestration, as noted in b.i.1.ii above.
 2. Elevation
 - a. See comments above related to the two story brick masonry base, fenestration patterns, implied medium grey bays and top floor.
 - b. Re-examine the inset two story light cementitious panel and masonry enclosure that marks the accessible building entrance in light of comments above.
 - c. On floors 3 – 6, consider increasing the width of the north masonry return one additional window bay width.
 - d. Refer to b.i.1.ii above related to trash doors and painted metal transformer ventilation louver is adjacent to the garage ramp.
- iv. West Pleasant Street
 1. Site
 - a. No specific comments.

2. Elevation
 - a. See comments above related to the two story brick masonry base, fenestration patterns, implied medium grey bays and top floor.
 - b. Refer to b.i.1.ii above related to first floor unit windows face the parking ramp.
 - c. The relationship of the first floor unit fenestration is unsettling and likely unpleasant. Refer to reorganization outlined in b.i.1.ii to alleviate.

PANEL ACTION:

The panel recommended that the team continue to further develop the Schematic Phase with consideration of the comments, and return for additional review.

Attending:

Ned Howe, Gary Hanley – Enterprise Homes
Magda Westerhout, Nancy Leibracht – Marks Thomas Architects
Aliza Hertzmark – Colbert Matz Rosenfelt

Gaylord Sutton, Dan Taylor – BDC
Brian Greenan – Mayor’s Office

UDARP Panel Members- Ms. Judith Meany, Messrs. Gary Bowden, Rich Burns and David Haresign*

Planning Department- Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Alex Hoffman